

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 PM-03 ISO-00 OFA-01 OES-02 DODE-00 /013 W

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R 270650Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 343

INFO AMEMBASSY MANILA

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LIMDIS

FOR EA/IMS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCLR TBIO MY

SUBJ: ALPHA HELIX EXPEDITION

REF: A) STATE 148191 B) KL 3284

1. DR. GEARY OF ALPHA HELIX EXPEDITION TELEPHONED EMBASSY JUNE 24 FROM TAWAU, SABAH, WITH REQUEST THAT EMBASSY ASSIST IN EXPEDITING ISSUANCE OF MALAYSIAN VISAS PER REF B. AFTER CHECKING WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY, WE DETERMINED THAT BUREAUCRATIC DIFFICULTIES IN SABAH IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT, KOTA KINABALU, WERE APPARENTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HOLDUP IN ISSUANCE OF VISAS WHICH ALPHA HELIX PARTY DID NOT OBTAIN IN MANILA. UPON ARRIVAL IN TAWAU, ALPHA HELIX EXPEDITION MEMBERS WERE GIVEN FOUR-DAY VISAS AND, ON BASIS OF ANOTHER TELEPHONE CALL FROM DR. GEARY THIS MORNING (JUNE 26), IT APPEARS PROBLEMS ARE BEING RESOLVED WITH SABAH IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT. DR. GEARY HOPES ALPHA HELIX PARTY WILL BE GRANTED VISAS FOR SIX OR SEVEN WEEKS RESEARCH IN COWIE BAY.

2. WE HAVE REMINDED DR. GEARY THAT ISSUANCE OF VISAS IN SABAH IS SOLE PREROGATIVE OF SABAH GOVERNMENT IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT AND ALL THAT EMBASSY AND FOREIGN MINISTRY OF KUALA LUMPUR CAN DO IS TO PROVIDE FACILITATIVE

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ASSISTANCE. WE ALSO TOLD HIM THAT WE WERE SURPRISED

THAT SABAH GOVERNMENT INITIALLY GRANTED CLEARANCE FOR COWIE BAY (TAWAU AREA) BECAUSE OF POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES OF SABAH COASTAL REGION.

3. REGARDING CLEARANCE REQUEST PER REF A, WE TOLD DR. GEARY THAT YET ANOTHER REQUEST FOR VISIT TO SANDAKAN IS NON-STARTER BECAUSE SANDAKAN AND DARVEL BAY WERE SPECIFICALLY TURNED DOWN EARLIER BY SABAH GOVERNMENT. THEREFORE, WE RECOMMENDED TO DR. GEARY THAT ALPHA HELIX REQUEST FOR SANDAKAN PORT CALL JULY 15 - 19 BE WITHDRAWN. HE AGREED AND WE WILL NOT PURSUE THIS ASPECT WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY.

4. FRANKLY, WE ARE IN DANGER OF DAMAGING WORKING RELATIONSHIPS WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR PROCESSING ALPHA HELIX AND OTHER CLEARANCE REQUESTS. OFF AGAIN-ON AGAIN NATURE OF EXPEDITION, SHORT LEAD TIMES FOR PROCESSING CLEARANCE REQUESTS, FREQUENT CHANGES OF ITINERARY, AND NOW ANOTHER REQUEST TO VISIT SANDAKAN (ALREADY SPECIFICALLY DENIED BY SABAH AND MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT) HAVE COMPLICATED THESE RELATIONSHIPS. WE LEAVE IT TO DEPARTMENT HOW BEST TO EXPLAIN TO SCRIPPS AND ALPHA HELIX PROJECT MANAGERS THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITIES CONCERNING SABAH AND WHAT CAN BE PERCEIVED AS AN EXCESSIVE DISPLAY OF U.S. INTEREST THERE. WHILE WE WILL DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO ACCOMMODATE ALPHA HELIX IN MAKING VISA ARRANGEMENTS, WE BELIEVE WE HAVE REACHED OUR LIMIT IN PRESSING EXPEDITION'S NUMEROUS AND OFTEN CONFUSING CLEARANCE AND VISA REQUESTS.  
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